

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 059905
ORIGIN PM-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 SIG-03 SSO-00 INR-10
INRE-00 SS-15 SP-02 PA-01 EB-08 /067 R

DRAFTED BY PM/ISO:CCORDER:DME
APPROVED BY PM/ISO:JEBURGESS
NEA/RA:W.GROSS
NEA/ARN:A.BERGSTROM
OSD/ISA:J.EILER

-----024723 090100Z /15 R

O R 082245Z MAR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
SECDEF/ISA
JCS
CNO/OP/611WASHDC
USCINCEUR
CINCUSNAVEUR
COMSIXTHFLT

S E C R E T STATE 059905

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, LY

SUBJECT: PLANNED SIXTH FLEET FIRING EXERCISE

REF: TRIPOLI 362 - NOTAL

1. APPRECIATE TRIPOLI BRINGING SIXTH FLEET EXERCISE TO
DEPARTMENTS ATTENTION.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 059905

2. THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HAS INFORMED US THAT DURING THE
PERIOD 11-13 MARCH 1978, CARRIER TASK GROUPS INCLUDING THE
USS NIMITZ (CVAN 68) AND USS AMERICA (CVA 66) WILL CONDUCT
FLIGHT OPERATIONS OFF THE COAST OF LIBYA IN CONJUNCTION WITH
AN OPEN OCEAN MISSILE EXERCISE. BOTH CARRIERS WILL OPERATE
WITHIN A 50NM RADIUS LATITUDE OF 33-05N, LONGITUDE 17-05E.
NO CARRIER AIRCRAFT WILL APPROACH CLOSER THAN 50NM FROM THE

COAST OF LIBYA. IN ORDER TO ASSESS LIBYAN REACTIONS TO THESE OPERATIONS, AN ELECTRONICS SURVEILLANCE AIRCRAFT (EP-3E) WILL BE TASKED TO PROVIDE DIRECT SUPPORT WHILE OPERATING IN AN AREA NO CLOSER THAN 75NM FROM THE COAST OF LIBYA.

3. THESE OPERATIONS WILL SERVE TO REAFFIRM THE RIGHT TO OPERATE FREELY IN INTERNATIONAL AIRSPACE. THE NAVY IS WELL AWARE THAT THESE OPERATIONS WILL TAKE PLACE IN AN AREA CONTINGUOUS TO AN AREA CONSIDERED TO BE POLITICALLY SENSITIVE

BY THE DEPARTMENT (I.E., 50NM OFF THE COASTLINE) AND WILL EXERCISE EXTREME CAUTION TO ASSURE THAT NO OPERATIONS PENETRATE THAT AREA.

4. IN ORDER TO AVOID PUBLIC MISUNDERSTANDING OR MISINFORMATION AND TO COUNTER ANY PROPAGANDA ATTACK BY LIBYAN GOVERNMENT CONCERNING FORTHCOMING MISSILEX EMBASSY MAY DRAW ON THE FOLLOWING IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION.

QUOTE. FOURTEEN SIXTH FLEET SHIPS WILL PARTICIPATE IN AN OPEN-OCEAN MISSILE AND GUNNERY EXERCISE MARCH 11-12 IN THE SOUTHEASTERN MEDITERRANEAN. THE EXERCISE WILL BE CONDUCTED IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS. A SIMILAR MISSILE EXERCISE WAS CONDUCTED BY THE SIXTH FLEET IN THIS AREA OF THE MEDITERRANEAN IN JULY 1977.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 059905

THE AREA WAS SELECTED BECAUSE IT IS GENERALLY FREE OF COMMERCIAL AIR AND SEA TRAFFIC AND HAS NO APPRECIABLE COMMERCIAL FISHING ACTIVITY. THIS CHOICE PROVIDES THE PARTICIPATING SHIPS WITH A COMPARATIVELY OPEN AREA APPROXIMATELY 100 MILES IN DIAMETER IN WHICH TO FIRE MISSILES AT PILOTLESS (DRONE) TARGETS WITH NO DANGER TO CIVILIAN TRAFFIC. CONTINUOUS RADAR AND VISUAL SURVEILLANCE WILL BE CONDUCTED TO ENSURE THAT THE EXERCISE AREA REMAINS FREE OF ALL OTHER SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT. AN INTERNATIONAL NOTICE TO AVIATORS AND MARINERS (NOTAM) HAS BEEN ISSUED BY MESSAGE ADVISING OF THE EXERCISE. MISSILE EXERCISES ARE ROUTINELY SCHEDULED FOR SIXTH FLEET SHIPS TO TRAIN PERSONNEL AND TO COORDINATE THE USE OF SURFACE-TO-AIR AND AIR-TO-AIR WEAPONRY. SHIPS PARTICIPATING IN THE EXERCISE WILL BE USS ALBANY, USS CALIFORNIA, USS SOUTH CAROLINA, USS NIMITZ, USS AMERICA, USS BIGELOW, USS LAWRENCE, USS CONYNGHAM, USS JOSEPHUS DANIELS, USS R.L. PAGE, USS SAMPSON, USS BARRY, USS MANLEY AND USS SAVANNAH.

5. FOLLOWING ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ARE PROVIDED FOR USE AS NECESSARY:

Q. WILL THERE BE TARGET SHIPS OR AIRCRAFT?

A. THERE WILL BE POLOTLESS, RADIO CONTROLLED TARGET DRONES, NO TARGET SHIPS.

Q. WHERE ELSE HAS THE NAVY BEEN FIRING THEIR MISSILES?
ARE THESE AREAS SAFE?

A. MISSILE AND GUNNERY EXERCISES ARE CONDUCTED PERIODICALLY IN VARIOUS AREAS OF THE MED AFTER COMPLETE VISUAL AND RADAR SURVEILLANCE PROVES THE AREA TO BE CLEAR OF SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT. A NOTICE TO AVIATORS AND MARINERS (NOTAM) IS ALWAYS ISSUED IN ADVANCE BY MESSAGE.

Q. WAS THIS CHANGE IN MISSILE FIRING ZONES MADE AS A RESULT OF THE BOMB DROPPED ON SARDINIA?

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 059905

A. THERE IS NO CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO.

Q. HAS THE LIBYAN GOVT APPROVED THE MISSILEX?

A. THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT RECOGNIZE ANY FOREIGN GOVERNMENT JURISDICTION TO APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE U.S. NAVY EXERCISES IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS.

Q. WHAT PRECAUTIONS WILL BE TAKEN TO WARN SHIPPING OR AIRCRAFT?

A. AN INTERNATIONAL NOTICE TO AVIATORS AND MARINERS WILL BE ISSUED. THE AREA WILL BE CONTINUOUSLY MONITORED BOTH BY RADAR AND VISUALLY. THE EXERCISE AREA IS CLEAR OF AIRWAYS AND SHIPPING ROUTES. IN EVENT AIRCRAFT OR SHIPS APPROACH THE EXERCISE AREA THEY WILL BE NOTIFIED ON INTERNATIONAL FREQUENCIES AND WILL BE ASKED TO REMAIN CLEAR OF THE AREA.

Q. WILL THE TARGETS BE RECOVERED?

A. YES.

Q. WHAT DIRECTION WILL THE TARGETS FLY? TOWARD LIBYA?

A. DRONES WILL FLY IN VARIOUS DIRECTIONS AND WILL BE UNDER POSITIVE CONTROL AT ALL TIMES. LOSS OR TERMINATION OF CONTROL AUTOMATICALLY CAUSES DRONES TO ABORT (I.E. ENGINE STOPS AND PARACHUTE DEPLOYS). DRONE HEADINGS WILL BE SUCH THAT OPPOSING SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILES CAN BE FIRED IN A NORTHERLY DIRECTION, AWAY FROM LIBYA.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 059905

Q. DO THE MISSILES HAVE DESTRUCT MECHANISMS?

A. YES.

Q. WHAT MISSILES ARE YOU TESTING?

A. A VARIETY OF SURFACE-TO-AIR AND AIR-TO-AIR MISSILES
NORMALLY CARRIED ABOARD SIXTHFLT SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT.

Q. ARE ANY OTHER NAVIES PARTICIPATING IN THIS EXERCISE?

A. NO.

Q. ARE THERE SAFETY OBSERVERS?

A. YES, ON EACH SHIP IN AN AIRBORNE RADAR EQUIPPED
AIRCRAFT. ADDITIONALLY A CHIEF SAFETY OBSERVERS
CORRELATES INPUTS FROM ALL SORUCES AND CONTROLS
THE RANGE SAFETY RADIO NET.

6. STATEMENT IN PARA 4 AND Q'S AND A'S IN PARA 5
SHOULD NOT BE VOLUNTARILY RELEASED AND SHOULD BE DRAWN
AS ONLY IN RESPONSE TO DIRECT QUESTIONS.
VANCE

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 059905
ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /013 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:EUR/WE/EJBEIGEL

APPROVED BY:EUR/WE:MRPOWELL

-----008206 161716Z /23

R 161500Z MAR 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO RUFHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 0000

AMEMBASSY MADRID

S E C R E T STATE 059905

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 59905 ACTION TRIPOLI CAIRO TUNIS
VALLETTA SECDEF/ISA JCS CNO/OP/611WASHDC USCINCEUR CINCUSNAVEUR
COMSIXTHFLT MAR 8

QUOTE S E C R E T STATE 059905

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, LY

SUBJECT: PLANNED SIXTH FLEET FIRING EXERCISE

REF: TRIPOLI 362 - NOTAL

1. APPRECIATE TRIPOLI BRINGING SIXTH FLEET EXERCISE TO
DEPARTMENTS ATTENTION.

2. THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HAS INFORMED US THAT DURING THE
PERIOD 11-13 MARCH 1978, CARRIER TASK GROUPS INCLUDING THE
USS NIMITZ (CVAN 68) AND USS AMERICA (CVA 66) WILL CONDUCT
FLIGHT OPERATIONS OFF THE COAST OF LIBYA IN CONJUNCTION WITH
AN OPEN OCEAN MISSILE EXERCISE. BOTH CARRIERS WILL OPERATE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 059905

WITHIN A 50NM RADIUS LATITUDE OF 33-05N, LONGITUDE 17-05E.
NO CARRIER AIRCRAFT WILL APPROACH CLOSER THAN 50NM FROM THE
COAST OF LIBYA. IN ORDER TO ASSESS LIBYAN REACTIONS TO THESE
OPERATIONS, AN ELECTRONICS SURVEILLANCE AIRCRAFT (EP-3E) WILL
BE TASKED TO PROVIDE DIRECT SUPPORT WHILE OPERATING IN AN
AREA NO CLOSER THAN 75NM FROM THE COAST OF LIBYA.

3. THESE OPERATIONS WILL SERVE TO REAFFIRM THE RIGHT TO OPER-
ATE FREELY IN INTERNATIONAL AIRSPACE. THE NAVY IS WELL
AWARE THAT THESE OPERATIONS WILL TAKE PLACE IN AN AREA
CONTINGOUS TO AN AREA CONSIDERED TO BE POLITICALLY SENSITIVE

BY THE DEPARTMENT (I.E., 50NM OFF THE COASTLINE) AND WILL
EXERCISE EXTREME CAUTION TO ASSURE THAT NO OPERATIONS
PENETRATE THAT AREA.

4. IN ORDER TO AVOID PUBLIC MISUNDERSZANDING OR MISINFORMA-
TION AND TO COUNTER ANY PROPAGANDA ATTACK BY LIBYAN GOVERN-
MENT CONCERNING FORTHCOMING MISSILEX EMBASSY MAY DRAW ON
THE FOLLOWING IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION.

QUOTE. FOURTEEN SIXTH FLEET SHIPS WILL PARTICIPATE IN AN
OPEN-OCEAN MISSILE AND GUNNERY EXERCISE MARCH 11-12 IN THE

SOUTHEASTERN MEDITERRANEAN. THE EXERCISE WILL BE CONDUCTED IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS. A SIMILAR MISSILE EXERCISE WAS CONDUCTED BY THE SIXTH FLEET IN THIS AREA OF THE MEDITERRANEAN IN JULY 1977.

THE AREA WAS SELECTED BECAUSE IT IS GENERALLY FREE OF COMMERCIAL AIR AND SEA TRAFFIC AND HAS NO APPRECIABLE COMMERCIAL FISHING ACTIVITY. THIS CHOICE PROVIDES THE PARTICIPATING SHIPS WITH A COMPARATIVELY OPEN AREA APPROXIMATELY 100 MILES IN DIAMETER IN WHICH TO FIRE MISSILES AT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 059905

PILOTLESS (DRONE) TARGETS WITH NO DANGER TO CIVILIAN TRAFFIC CONTINUOUS RADAR AND VISUAL SURVEILLANCE WILL BE CONDUCTED TO ENSURE THAT THE EXERCISE AREA REMAINS FREE OF ALL OTHER SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT. AN INTERNATIONAL NOTICE TO AVIATORS AND MARINERS (NOTAM) HAS BEEN ISSUED BY MESSAGE ADVISING OF THE EXERCISE. MISSILE EXERCISES ARE ROUTINELY SCHEDULED FOR SIXTH FLEET SHIPS TO TRAIN PERSONNEL AND TO COORDINATE THE USE OF SURFACE-TO-AIR AND AIR-TO-AIR WEAPONRY. SHIPS PARTICIPATING IN THE EXERCISE WILL BE USS ALBANY, USS CALIFORNIA, USS SOUTH CAROLINA, USS NIMITZ, USS AMERICA, USS BIGELOW, USS LAWRENCE, USS CONYNGHAM, USS JOSEPHUS DANIELS, USS R.L. PAGE, USS SAMPSON, USS BARRY, USS MANLEY AND USS SAVANNAH.

5. FOLLOWING ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ARE PROVIDED FOR USE AS NECESSARY:

Q. WILL THERE BE TARGET SHIPS OR AIRCRAFT?

A. THERE WILL BE PILOTLESS, RADIO CONTROLLED TARGET DRONES, NO TARGET SHIPS.

Q. WHERE ELSE HAS THE NAVY BEEN FIRING THEIR MISSILES?
ARE THESE AREAS SAFE?

A. MISSILE AND GUNNERY EXERCISES ARE CONDUCTED PERIODICALLY IN VARIOUS AREAS OF THE MED AFTER COMPLETE VISUAL AND RADAR SURVEILLANCE PROVES THE AREA TO BE CLEAR OF SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT. A NOTICE TO AVIATORS AND MARINERS (NOTAM) IS ALWAYS ISSUED IN ADVANCE BY MESSAGE.

Q. WAS THIS CHANGE IN MISSILE FIRING ZONES MADE AS A RESULT OF THE BOMB DROPPED ON SARDINIA?

A. THERE IS NO CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO.

Q. HAS THE LIBYAN GOVT APPROVED THE MISSILEX?

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 059905

A. THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT RECOGNIZE ANY FOREIGN GOVERNMENT JURISDICTION TO APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE U.S. NAVY EXERCISES IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS.

Q. WHAT PRECAUTIONS WILL BE TAKEN TO WARN SHIPPING OR AIRCRAFT?

A. AN INTERNATIONAL NOTICE TO AVIATORS AND MARINERS WILL BE ISSUED. THE AREA WILL BE CONTINUOUSLY MONITORED BOTH BY RADAR AND VISUALLY. THE EXERCISE AREA IS CLEAR OF AIRWAYS AND SHIPPING ROUTES. IN EVENT AIRCRAFT OR SHIPS APPROACH THE EXERCISE AREA THEY WILL BE NOTIFIED ON INTERNATIONAL FREQUENCIES AND WILL BE ASKED TO REMAIN CLEAR OF THE AREA.

Q. WILL THE TARGETS BE RECOVERED?

A. YES.

Q. WHAT DIRECTION WILL THE TARGETS FLY? TOWARD LIBYA?

A. DRONES WILL FLY IN VARIOUS DIRECTIONS AND WILL BE UNDER POSITIVE CONTROL AT ALL TIMES. LOSS OR TERMINATION OF CONTROL AUTOMATICALLY CAUSES DRONES TO ABORT (I.E. ENGINE STOPS AND PARACHUTE DEPLOYS). DRONE HEADINGS WILL BE SUCH THAT OPPOSING SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILES CAN BE FIRED IN A NORTHERLY DIRECTION, AWAY FROM LIBYA.

Q. DO THE MISSILES HAVE DESTRUCT MECHANISMS?

A. YES.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 059905

Q. WHAT MISSILES ARE YOU TESTING?

A. A VARIETY OF SURFACE-TO-AIR AND AIR-TO-AIR MISSILES NORMALLY CARRIED ABOARD SIXTHFLT SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT.

Q. ARE ANY OTHER NAVIES PARTICIPATING IN THIS EXERCISE?

A. NO.

Q. ARE THERE SAFETY OBSERVERS?

A. YES, ON EACH SHIP IN AN AIRBORNE RADAR EQUIPPED
AIRCRAFT. ADDITIONALLY A CHIEF SAFETY OBSERVERS
CORRELATES INPUTS FROM ALL SOURCES AND CONTROLS
THE RANGE SAFETY RADIO NET.

6. STATEMENT IN PARA 4 AND Q'S AND A'S IN PARA 5
SHOULD NOT BE VOLUNTARILY RELEASED AND SHOULD BE DRAWN
AS ONLY IN RESPONSE TO DIRECT QUESTIONS.
VANCE. UNQUOTE VANCE

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NAVAL EXERCISES, MISSILES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE059905
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: CCORDER:DME
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780105-0392
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780391/aaaacyyx.tel
Line Count: 395
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: cceb0fcb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN PM
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 8
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 TRIPOLI 362
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3398973
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PLANNED SIXTH FLEET FIRING EXERCISE
TAGS: MILI, LY
To: TRIPOLI
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/cceb0fcb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014